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ART. IX.—*Life and Correspondence of Hannah More.*

Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More. By WILLIAM ROBERTS, Esq. 2 Vols. 12mo. New York. 1834.

THESE volumes are exceedingly interesting; not because the biography is ably managed, however; for the writer is not by any means the one we should have chosen for the office; his want of grace and skill in writing would be a sufficient disqualification for an undertaking, which requires taste and discrimination in the highest degree, to enable him to produce his materials to the best advantage. But we will not speak in dispraise of a work which appears to have been conscientiously done, and will simply express our regret, that he had not given most of his attention to that part of his subject, which will have most interest for the public mind. The Life of Hannah More covers a large space in literary history, reaching back from the present times, to those of Garrick, Johnson, and Burke; she was thrown into acquaintance and intimacy with a great variety of characters, and all who were capable of appreciating character seem to have felt great respect for her excellent heart, and her active and practical mind. Her intellect was rather judicious and penetrating, than original; but by turning all her attainments to the best account, both in conversation and writing;—by knowing when to speak with effect, and when to be silent;—and by manifesting in every word and deed, that benevolence which implies a well-disciplined mind, she secured the respect and attachment of such a variety of eminent persons, that we are actually confounded at the wide reach of associations which her life brings before us in a single view. There is Horace Walpole on one page, with his lordly foppery writing to his ‘dear St. Hannah;’ on the other, we see the melancholy majesty of Johnson. Here is Garrick, ‘whose death eclipsed the gaiety of nations;’ there is Burke with his wonderful powers, resembling that pavilion in the fairy tale, which could cover the territory of a nation, or be contracted to the dimensions of a sentry-box, at pleasure. But it would take too much time even to run over the list of memorable names, which are thus connected with her own. We know of nothing except the Waverley novels, which brings so many various characters before us, and we cannot help thinking that a

writer, thoroughly versed in literary history, might have made a work from these materials, which would have taken as fast hold of the public mind, as Boswell's *Johnson*. Say what we will of that writer's *coxcombry*, nothing is more certain, than that his work is the model for a biography, since it tells what the reader wants to know. This is the great point, on which success in this kind of writing depends,—to tell what the intelligent reader wants to know. In the case of *Johnson*, he wants to know his conversation,—his familiar remarks, because they were the evidence of his strength: in writing the *Life* of *Hannah More*, this would not have been the point toward which curiosity would have turned, and Boswell, had he undertaken it, would have liked nothing better, than sketching an illustrious group of distinguished characters, himself also among them. In his hands, all would have been life and bustle, and not grave and inanimate as a dance of death.

We acknowledge that there is a difficulty in the execution of such works as this, arising from the circumstance, that the character requires to be considered in various aspects, while the biographer feels a particular interest in one, and perhaps is wholly unqualified to judge of the other. The *life* of *Cowper* is an example. *Hayley* regarded him as a literary man, and was well able to estimate his character, in that point of view. But *Cowper's* life exhibited a remarkable case in pathology, which required great accuracy of observation, to determine where moral agency ended, and insanity began; these facts the biographer did not think it well to publish, though he could not quite suppress them; and accordingly, whoever wishes to understand the nature of the complaint from him is disappointed. Again, *Cowper* was eminently religious, and was partial to a particular view of that great subject, though he was the slave of none. A late writer has undertaken to exhibit him in this light, and his biography, though a very feeble performance, has obtained a very general circulation, because the public are interested to know what *Cowper* was in these relations. There are, then, several classes of readers,—one wishing to know the literary, another the religious, another the domestic and social character of the person described, and the chance is that the biographer, if disposed to satisfy them all, shall be able, from his habits of mind, to satisfy the curiosity of but one. The same difficulty exists, though not to the same extent, in the case of *Hannah More*. As her gay sister *Sarah*

said of her, ‘Hannah was of the christian faction ;’ and her biographer, without any exceptionable amount of party spirit, considers this the most important light in which her character can be presented. So without question it is ; but the way to exhibit it to admiration and example, is not to hold it up like a thing apart, but to show how it gave a daily beauty to her life, preserving her simplicity, when she was caressed by nobles, princes, and what was still more flattering, by illustrious men, and how it enabled her to turn away from the high society which sought her, to devote her life, her powers, and her self-made fortune to the glorious enterprise of doing good. Let the biographer show the effect of christianity in the life and intellectual exertions ; this is the way to do it honor ; he may show how it kept Cowper’s mind in tune, during the lucid intervals, when it waked sounds so fine, original and sweet, that the world stood still to hear them ; and how it made Hannah More lovely and attractive to persons of all descriptions, while she lived, and secured to her, after death, a name of lasting renown.

As this work is likely to be very generally read, we shall not pursue the thread of the narrative, except so far as to make observations on some particular parts. The earliest are by far the most valuable, because they take us into the midst of a literary society, unequalled for its splendor.

Hannah More was the daughter of a schoolmaster, and his five daughters were bred to the same profession. ‘The worthy man is said to have had a great dread of female pedantry, but probably communicated unconsciously to his daughter, a taste for such pursuits as interested his own mind. There was, however, no cause for apprehension ; for, remarkable as she was for the variety and extent of her attainments, she never took her place in society, simply as a literary lady, and this is one proof of her ability, since there are but few persons so situated, in whom the consciousness of having a reputation to sustain, would not interfere with lightness and grace of motion. In her childhood she read the Spectator,—a book which, in that day, had attractions for children : it would be worth while to put it into the hands of a child, by way of experiment, now. In these days, the means of intellectual enjoyment suited to an early age are multiplied a thousandsfold. Of this there is no question, but it may admit of doubt, whether the intellectual enjoyment is increased in any thing like the same proportion.

We do not find the best appetites, where there is the greatest amount and variety of provisions ; nor are we at all sure, that this vast increase of luxuries in reading, bodes any good to the health and happiness of the youthful mind. It makes them read more ; but not to more advantage. The author's remark upon the *Spectator* is very characteristic of his usual style ; he says that it was, ' if not of profundity enough to ground a correct taste, at least of sufficient grace to direct it in a due course of exercise and cultivation.'

The place of her residence in youth was Bristol, where her sisters kept a boarding-school. The first on the long list of her distinguished acquaintance, was the elder Sheridan, who came to deliver lectures on eloquence in that city. He was struck with her prematurity of talent, and was doubtless a good judge of real ability, though his life was too roving and unsettled for him to accomplish much, even in his chosen pursuit. At the time when her intellectual gifts led him to cultivate her acquaintance, she was only in her sixteenth year. Ferguson also, who was delivering astronomical lectures in Bristol, was one of these admirers. To have her acquaintance sought by such men of note, was exceedingly flattering to one so young ; but the only effect of it seems to have been to encourage to a literary effort. She wrote a pastoral drama, called the *Search after Happiness* ; whether it succeeded or not, we are wholly unable to tell ; her biographer merely says, in the Delphic style, ' the attempt succeeded as it deserved ;' we can see no reason why it should not deserve to succeed ; but we have many doubts whether its fate was so happy.

At this period she became acquainted with Dean Tucker, the well known political writer, and Dr. Langhorne, a person of some distinction in his day. Some of the letters of the latter are inserted, parts of which are light and graceful enough, but have no particular claim to insertion. But the friend to whom she appears to have felt most indebted, was Sir James Stonehouse, who had relinquished a large practice as a physician to take holy orders, and was then residing in Bristol. Besides encouraging her to cultivate her talents, he did much to draw out and cherish those religious feelings, which grew constantly stronger as she advanced in years. She was also the object of a more tender attachment ; a rich old bachelor fell violently in love with her, and she accepted his offers ; but some caprice on his part induced him to defer the marriage from day to day,

till she resolved to be trifled with no longer. The engagement was dissolved by mutual consent, and the discarded lover became her friend. Without the fear of a suit for breach of promise before his eyes, he was desirous to settle an annuity upon her, and by the persuasions of her friends she was induced to accept it, though with long hesitation. At his death he left her a legacy of a thousand pounds. All her affairs of the heart seem to have been disposed of in a summary manner in early life. Her hand was again solicited and refused, but by whom, or what, history does not say. Of these two transactions her biographer remarks, ‘there is on the face of them a stamp of that high-mindedness and moral strength, by which the dignity of her character was illustrated in the various walk of her christian life.’ What he may see in them we do not know ; to us, the face of the latter of the two appears singularly destitute of features ; in the other, we have no doubt she conducted herself with great propriety ; at the same time there is nothing to call for a long and solemn flourish of the trumpets of his praise.

This is all the biographer has been able to gather of her early life from 1745, when she was born, till 1774, when she went to London ; we believe this was the year, but her vicious neglect to date her letters on many occasions, leaves us uncertain at times, when we wish to be sure. This, he says, brings her ‘to that stage in the progress of ardent inexperience, when the blooming speculations of hope and fancy are to be exchanged for vulgar verities.’ Very fortunate was she if her ardent inexperience lasted to the age of twenty-nine, and if her blooming speculations could then be exchanged for such vulgar verities as the acquaintance of Johnson and Garrick, in one sex, and Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Carter, in the other. We are not informed what conducted her to London, nor to what good fortune it was owing that she became at once an object of flattering attentions. A provincial reputation for talent, be it ever so great, is not often a passport to London society, and as for her works, we hear of scarcely anything except the *Search after Happiness*, which, there is reason to suppose, did not meet with unusual success. Garrick, it is true, had some reason to be prejudiced in her favor ; he accidentally saw a letter in which she described her own delight at witnessing his performance of *Lear* : he was pleased with her critical remarks, and doubtless thought the subject very happily selected. Thus prepossessed in her favor, he sought an introduction to her, and

finding his favorable impressions confirmed, he introduced her to his own circle, which included the eminent, the fashionable, and the great,—if we may use that conventional term to describe the noble, in presence of the majestic Johnson, and the sublime and beautiful Burke.

Nothing can be more interesting than her account of such persons,—particularly Johnson: curiosity is never satiated with notices of this great man, of whom some moderns speak with a foolish affectation of contempt. Faults and follies no doubt he had; but the single circumstance that these were so thoroughly sought out and exhibited to the world, without destroying the stern grandeur of his character, is enough to prove that his place is among the great. The account given of him in this work confirms what was more than suspected before,—that most of the impatient remarks and thundering rejoinders which appear in Boswell, were aimed at the head of that worthy himself, who provoked them by his officiousness and affectation. When Hannah More first saw him, and waited his appearance as if she was expecting a ghost, she was relieved by seeing him present himself with a smile on his countenance and a macaw of Sir Joshua's in his hand. When she went to his house with Miss Reynolds, he received her with the most polite attention. Miss Reynolds told him that before he came in Miss More had seated herself in his great arm chair, hoping to catch something of his inspiration. He laughed and told her it reminded him of a night spent by Boswell and himself in Scotland, near the spot where the witches appeared to Macbeth; their enthusiasm prevented their sleeping; but in the morning they ascertained that their raptures were thrown away, and that the place in question was in a different part of the country; for he never sat in that chair. She often met him in company and always found him disposed to converse, generally in the style of playful argument; one day he reproved her with pretended sharpness for reading Catholic books of devotion. She was beginning to defend herself; but he took her hand, and with a tear in his eye, said to her with affecting earnestness, ‘Child! I am glad that you read such books, by whomsoever they were written.’ She says that she never saw him angry but once, and that was when she happened to allude to a passage in Tom Jones; he said, ‘I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book; I am sorry to hear you have read it; a confession which no modest lady should ever make. I

scarcely know a more corrupt work.' With respect to Boswell, she gives the same impression with others, that he was a vain, good humored creature, not destitute of talent, but with a singular absurdity of mind. His greatest failing was his convivial propensity ; he gave offence to Miss More on one occasion, when he was mightily elevated with wine, and was reproved by her so severely, that he shows some little resentment in his book ; not saying anything decidedly against her, but representing her as a great flatterer of Johnson. She was certainly a prime favorite of the giant : and this perhaps was one cause of Boswell's unpleasant feelings.

She gives an equally pleasing impression of Garrick ; and in truth the only imputation ever thrown on him was that of avarice ; and this, there are instances of liberality enough recorded of him, to disprove. Perhaps it arose from the excellence of his domestic character, — a character, which implied much virtue in him whose profession exposed him to many temptations, and whose social powers were such that he was admired and sought for by all. Garrick explained to Miss More the reason, why Johnson sometimes indulged himself in severe remarks upon him ; and this was, that being conscious of far superior merit, it was not in human nature always to look with complacency upon his friend's superior success ; for while Garrick was rich, Johnson was poor ; and while Garrick was courted by the noble, Johnson seldom received any attention from men of rank, though Boswell has made the most of a few instances in which he was invited into their circle. Miss More was in raptures at witnessing Garrick's performance on the stage, where she had the singular good fortune to see him act his parts for the last time, before bidding farewell to the stage forever. She speaks of his reading as unrivalled ; the common idea is that he did not excel in this department of his art, but she gives an example of his talent which must be admitted as conclusive so far as it goes. 'I'll tell you the most ridiculous circumstance in the world. After dinner Garrick took up the Monthly Review, (civil gentlemen, by the by, these Monthly Reviewers) and read Sir Eldred, with all his pathos and all his graces. I think I never was so ashamed in my life ; but he read it so superlatively, that I cried like a child. Only think what a scandalous thing, — to cry at the reading of one's own poetry ! I could have beaten myself, for it looked as if I thought it very moving, which I can truly say, is very far from

being the case. But the beauty of the jest is this ; Mrs. Garrick twinkled as well as I, and made as many apologies for crying at her husband's reading, as I for crying at my own verses.'

She gives a lively idea of the interest inspired by the farewell performances of this great actor. She says that the eagerness to see him was inconceivable ; duchesses and countesses were glad to get places in the upper boxes, and those who were formerly too proud to go, would then courtesy to the ground for the worst seats in the house. The theatre was in those days a more general resort than it has ever been since ; and Miss More, though she was always serious in her religious views and feelings, did not then regard the stage, as she did some years after. She even caught the dramatic inspiration, and wrote her tragedy called *Percy*. Garrick exerted himself to have it produced under the most favorable circumstances, though he had left the stage himself; his interest was great, and his taste and judgment were regarded as established law. He wrote the prologue and epilogue himself ; on the night when it appeared he went with her to the theatre, where they had the gratification of finding it received with unbounded applause. 'When he had finished his prologue and epilogue, which are excellent, he desired I would pay him. Dryden, he said, used to have five guineas apiece, but as he was a richer man, he would be content with a handsome supper, and a bottle of claret. We haggled sadly about the price, I insisting that I could only afford to give him a beef-steak, and a pot of porter ; and at about twelve we sat down to some toast and honey, with which the temperate bard expressed himself perfectly contented.' Such touches as this are worth volumes of biographical description. The profits of this play amounted to six hundred pounds ; but it brought her approbation, which was worth more to her ; Mrs. Montague wrote her warm congratulations ; Dr. Percy returned his 'best thanks for her invaluable present,' and presented the thanks of the Duke of Northumberland, and Earl Percy. Mr. Home called to rejoice in her success, while he was mourning for the untimely fate of his own Alfred ; the Man of Feeling, though as far off as Edinburgh, declared that he had shed tears in reading it ; but while the town was ringing with her success, a look into her apartment shows that she was spending her time in reading such works as Locke on the Epistles, and West on the Resurrection.

Several passages in her letters give an idea of Garrick's manner in social life. After one of her turns of slight illness, she says, 'Garrick, the other day, told me that he was in a violent hurry ; that he had just been to order his own, and Mrs. Garrick's mourning, — had settled every thing with the undertaker, and now called for a moment to take a few hints for an epitaph. I told him he was too late ; I had disposed of the employment a few days before to Dr. Johnson ; but if I thought he would praise me most, I should be glad to change ; as to hints I had but one to give ; which was to romance as much as he could, and to make the character as fine as possible.' But it was not long before he became himself the subject of an epitaph ; in the following year, 1779, he died, and was sincerely lamented by a large circle of friends. Cumberland records that he saw Johnson at the funeral service, bathed in tears. He appears to have been excellent in all the relations of life, and his conversation brilliant and exciting, but savoring of art borrowed from his profession ; kind and generous in his feelings, but fond of admiration ; with no faults worth mentioning, and many virtues deserving unqualified praise. For many years, Miss More was an inmate in the family of Mrs. Garrick, who called her her chaplain, and who appears to have sympathized with her in her religious feelings.

One of the most singular friends in her large circle, was Horace Walpole ; he is so constantly associated with old times, and his father's administration, that he is generally set down among the ancients, nearer Queen Anne than George the Third. But he lived till the close of the last century, and most of his works were published after he had reached his maturer years. He was so fastidious and shy in his whole character, that one would hardly expect to find him cultivating an acquaintance with strangers like Hannah More, and that too, on account of her literary pretensions, which he held in affected disdain, though it was the devouring ambition of his life to secure some literary renown ; and the probability is, that had she been of the other sex, he would have thought of her rather as a rival than a friend. But at this time he went freely into select society, where he was welcomed and treated with respect, as a man of elegant taste, and an amusing chronicle of old times ; and happening to meet with Hannah More, he was struck, like every one else, with her talent, liveliness, and general attraction. He invited her to his baby-house at

Strawberry-hill, where he exerted himself strenuously to entertain her ; afterwards he kept up a correspondence with her for years ; but though many of his letters are inserted in this work, we find very little that is characteristic of the writer ; they are labored and formal, and all seem as if it was an effort to write them. In truth, there could be little, except formality, between two parties so entirely opposed in all their tastes and principles. Walpole seems to have been somewhat embarrassed by her known seriousness and reverence, developments in which he was entirely deficient ; he sometimes alludes in a playful way to these qualities of his dear St. Hannah, as he calls her, but takes care not to express sentiments with which she might be offended.

But we have not room for these portraits, which sweep by us in such rapid succession ; events which were of small moment at the time, but have since grown into importance, by their connexion with distinguished names, abound in her letters written about the time of the American War. She attended the first representation of Sheridan's play, 'the Rivals,' which did not succeed, and of General Burgoyne's 'Maid of the Oaks,' which did succeed much better than his military expedition ; she passed an hour with Lord Howe, who complained bitterly of the ingratitude of his country, which was a little hard, considering that he had done nothing ; (for the particulars of his persecution, the reader must consult the Ebeling library, where he will find the pamphlets written on the occasion;) she lived when Cumberland's Odes appeared, and tried in vain to persuade Richard Owen Cambridge to read them ; she attended the trial of the Duchess of Kingston, and heard Dunning, whose manner was insufferably bad, coughing and spitting at every three words ; she was admitted to the friendship of Mrs. Delany, who had been the intimate of Swift, and was within hearing of the cry, when Guiscard stabbed Lord Oxford. She received calls from Dean Tucker, and Edmund Burke, on the same morning, and rejoiced that they had not met, since it was just after Burke had attacked the Dean in the House of Commons ; she dined one day with Gibbon, Sterne, Harris, Burney, Chambers and Ramsay, and the next with Bishop Porteous and Jonas Hanway ; she met the author of *Evelina*, just after that work appeared, and was surprised that with her youth and modesty, she could have picked up so much knowledge of life ; she was told by a friend of Pope, that the bard upon

his death-bed, not being able to carry a glass of jelly to his mouth, was in such a passion, that he threw it into Lady Chat-ham's face, and expired ; she read Mason's Life of Gray, when it first appeared, and was a believer for a time in the antiquity of Rowley's poems ; she heard the storm which raged round Dr. Johnson's impassive head, when his Lives of the Poets ap-peared ; she was invited to Mr. Thrale's to an assembly, on the very day when the master of the house so suddenly died of the luxuries of his table ; she received classical compli-ments from Bishop Lowth, and flirted with General Paoli ; she saw Mythology Bryant, who had been that morning to present his book ; one of the little princes requested to see it, and holding it a few minutes upside down, pronounced it an excel-lent work ; she quarrelled about the slave trade and the Eng-lish language with Lord Monboddo, and was received with pomp and favor by Bishop Watson ; she rejoiced over the publication of her friend, Dr. Kennicott's Hebrew Bible, and conversed with Sir William Jones ; she found an admirer in the person of General Oglethorpe, whose gallantry was not extinguishe^d by his age, which exceeded ninety ; she was one of the first to be struck in conversation with the amazing abili-ties of the conceited Lord Erskine ; the veteran Lord Bathurst lent her his collection of the original letters of Swift, Pope, Bolingbroke and Queen Mary, and Leonidas Glover sung his ballad called Hosier's Ghost to her, when he was past the age of eighty ; she played at children's games with Lord North, and had long and serious conversations with Burke. But this was near the close of that brilliant period ; star after star was fast going down : Johnson soon died, and she heard all the discord-ant elements of biography, which gave battle to each other over his grave. Her own feelings also changed ; she never had been fond of fashionable society, though circumstances had thrown her into the midst of it ; the stage she had utterly re-nounced and condemned, though her second attempt was nearly as successful as the first ; her conscience was always reproach-ing her with living only for self-gratification, and from this time she began to execute the purpose, which she had long delib-erately formed,—that of devoting her time and means to use-ful and charitable actions, and her heart to religious duty.

About this time she removed to a small cottage near Bristol at a place called Cowslip-green, and visited London only at distant intervals. She kept up a correspondence with Mrs. Boscawen,

the lady mentioned with so much respect in Boswell's Johnson, and Mrs. Montague, who by reason of her large fortune and intelligent conversation was an acknowledged leader in the world of fashion and taste. She wrote often to Sir William Pepys, who, though letter-writing was not his forte, wrote her with great length and punctuality ; and occasionally a missive from Horace Walpole pursued her into the shade. The public favor was so securely her own, that she felt no anxiety upon the subject ; there is something surprising in the popularity of her early productions ; doubtless they had great merit, but there was nothing in them which one would have thought could so fasten itself on the public taste, as to send every one of them through a long succession of editions. With this consciousness that she was approved by the wise, sought for by the great, and loved by the good, — with property enough in possession and in her power to secure a comfortable support, she began to give her mind wholly to religious subjects ; and the chapter which commences in the history of her life is entirely new, and even more honorable to her than the last.

Her associates and correspondents were now in general of a graver cast ; David Garrick was succeeded by John Newton, a man of great excellence and fervor, but somewhat too fond of describing himself as the old African slave. She did not wholly abandon London ; she returned to it on occasional visits, and was received with the same warmth as ever : but at Cowslip-green her time was passed in pursuits both of a literary and religious character ; her fine practical understanding prevented her from subsiding into a useless devotee, and her conscientiousness made her consult utility rather than profit and popularity in her writings. The subject of the slave-trade was then beginning to agitate the public mind, and Wilberforce was entering public life as the champion of this sacred cause ; the opposition to reform was powerful, headed by such statesmen as Dundas, supported by philosophers like Monboddo, not to speak of popular writers like Boswell : the two great statesmen of the day were interested on the right side, though they would not make the question the chief object of their attention ; but the amount of interest on the other side was so great as to make the result of the battle doubtful. Hannah More took the most anxious interest in these proceedings ; wishing to do her part to exert favorable influences on the public mind, she wrote her poem called the Slave-trade. We do not know what

effect nor what amount of circulation it had, but we find it complimented by Warton, Horne, and the less poetical authority, Bishop Watson. Walpole laughed a little at her *blackmanity*, not being able to comprehend why she, who had no slaves, should be interested on one side or the other. As her writings were always popular, we may presume that she did her part in correcting the error of the public mind ; but the question was soon decided, and the attention of all was drawn to the tempest which was rising in France. No one comprehended it, nor did any pretend to anticipate the result ; the friends of liberty rejoiced to hear the breaking of chains ; the advocates of the established order of things trembled to see how violently all things were shaken ; probably there never was a time in history when the minds of men were so entirely unsettled ; they knew not whether there was anything to hope for, nor how much there was to dread. Nothing but the unbounded confidence which was felt in the moral energy and statesmanlike resources of Pitt would have enabled England to ‘weather the storm.’

Her station in society had given her an opportunity of seeing much of the fashionable and the great, and she was fully convinced that the whole spirit of social life, in the higher circles, was adverse to the cultivation of religious principle. Many practices tolerated in it seemed to her to indicate an entire disregard to religious considerations ; such for example as Sunday concerts, the form of denying themselves by the words ‘not at home,’ and the prevailing want of sympathy with all those to whom they were bound to do good. Believing that some impression might be made, at least upon a few, she wrote her work called ‘Thoughts on the Manners of the Great,’ and sent it without her name into the world, where it soon excited much attention. It was not difficult to trace the author ; but many of those against whose practices it was aimed, and who had always considered themselves very tolerable christians, found it quite difficult to understand her drift. One of them told her, that he admired the institution which gave rest to those who labored ; but that it could not be meant for people of fashion, since, as they did nothing on any day, it could not be necessary for them to give that one to rest. But though many could not comprehend it, it was read by all, and some received suggestions from it, which produced a change in their habits of life. Apart from its moral bearing, it was needed in another point of view ; the spirit which went before the French revo-

lution was breaking up those associations, on which alone the noble depended for securing the prescriptive reverence they claimed ; for a long time the feudal feelings had been declining ; Lady Mary Montague in one of her letters complains bitterly of the manner in which rank had fallen in public estimation, even in her day ; of course the natural tendency was to still greater decay. Obviously the only way to prevent this bad result was for the great to be made to feel their obligations to those beneath them, that love might extort concessions which never would be made to fear. Hannah More appeared to feel something of this necessity ; while to most others it seemed necessary to do nothing, but suppress or tame down that fierce spirit which was rising against established institutions, merely because those who seemed most interested in those institutions were too proudly careless of them.

But to attempt under these circumstances to reform the great, though not easy to be accomplished, was too easy in the efforts required, to fill her high sense of duty. She had also found vices prevailing among the poor, many of which she thought were owing to their entire want of instruction. She determined to exert herself for their reform, as far as her influence extended ; and as her sisters had now been able to give up their school, and to retire with an adequate support for the rest of their lives, her plan was, with their assistance, to educate the poor children of the neighboring villages. Her design was conceived with as much judgment as generosity ; but it met with the most violent opposition, even from many of those who were to receive the benefit of her gratuitous services. We are not surprised at this, considering the alarming state of the nation at that time, when Pitt, like Sisyphus, was staggering under the stone, which required but little additional weight to make it crush him ; education was then, as it is now, spoken of as if it included the cultivation of the intellect alone ; and there were many, who doubted whether intellectual improvement alone would be a remedy for all the disorders of the social system. Education in its wide sense, that is, its true sense, is no doubt the power by which society is to be raised, and at the same time quieted, and secured ; but to suppose that a knowledge of a few sciences will produce this great result, or necessarily lead to it, is almost too absurd to be denied ; and yet, when education is understood in this limited sense by those who advocate, and those who oppose it, it is not sur-

prising if it should have seemed to many a dangerous experiment upon the public mind. But Hannah More was no visionary ; to make the subjects of instruction wiser and better was, in her opinion, what education was bound to do ; she did not believe it was possible to make them better, without making them wiser ; but she knew that they might be made wise for evil as well as for good, and therefore directed all her efforts to the moral and religious improvement of the children.

She selected Cheddar, a romantic village ten miles from Cowslip-green, as the scene of her first experiment. The first person to be propitiated, for she was obliged to solicit permission to do this favor, was a rich farmer, whom she was able to conciliate only by flattery and attention. The vicar of this place lived at the University of Oxford, and the curate at a place twelve miles distant ; in this hopeful region she commenced her enterprise, by hiring a house and a mistress at her own expense ; though the parents were suspicious, the children came in, and the prospect of success was encouraging. Though formerly, when divine service was performed there once in the sabbath, eight was considered a sufficient audience in the morning, and twenty in the afternoon, when they had carried on their school for a year, it was attended by two hundred old people, and as many children. The success which they met with here encouraged them to extend their operations, and in a short time they had twelve hundred children under their care. Their own resources were not equal to all these demands ; but they were sustained by generous friends, like Wilberforce, who stood ready to supply whatever was wanting. Considering that some of the villages were inhabited by miners, so rude and ferocious that officers of justice dared not venture among them, and that such persons were distrustful of an enterprise which they could not understand, their success might appear surprising, if there were not a thousand examples to show what kind and cheerful views of religion, a spirit of disinterested regard for others, and a heart engaged in its object, are able to do.

But as the fears excited by the French revolution prevailed more extensively in England, and found support in the approbation of revolutionary principles, which was openly expressed by a large party in that country, the attention of alarmists began to turn with apprehension to examine every thing that was new ; among others, her schools became suspected ; they were

institutions which had grown up at about the same time with the new political system ; they were not in the books ; no one could suppose, that anything less than a deep political design was the inspiring cause of so much effort and self-devotion. At first the chief difficulty had been with the young converts ; when the subject of religion was first embraced by their minds, they were anxious to distinguish themselves by doing some great thing. Her thorough good sense had always recognised the truth, that holiness of life was the only sure test of the religious character, and she was obliged to labor unceasingly, to prevent the ardor of her converts from spending itself on lighter matters of the law ; beside this, she felt the absolute necessity of their seeing not merely the truth, but seeing it in its proper light ; since those to whom it appeared in a gloomy, unsocial and forbidding aspect, were strangers to its spirit, though they might know its letter by heart. These difficulties were however surmounted, since it depended on her own efforts to subdue them ; but after a time, a storm of popular prejudice was excited against her, which had almost broken up her institutions, and had such an effect on her health, which was never firm, that it came near bringing her to the grave. It originated, probably, in some feeling of personal illwill. The curate of Blagdon, the parish in which Cowslip-green was situated, requested her to establish one of her schools there, and for several years expressed himself delighted with its effect ; but all at once he turned against her, accused her of being hostile to Church and State, and, as such a panic was then easily spread, he raised an outcry, which for a time beat from all quarters in a perfect storm. The charges against her show what kinds of transgressions were magnified into atrocious crimes by the feverish state of popular feeling. One charge was, that of Calvinism,—an enormous offence, of which, however, if her own words may be trusted, she was not guilty. ‘ As a party matter,’ she says, ‘ I never write nor talk about doctrines, thinking that it makes our tempers sour and unprofitable. The doctrines peculiar to Calvinism I do not adopt, though I much reverence many good men who maintain them.’ The other offence alleged, was that of occasionally permitting extemporary prayer in her schools ; it appeared that one or two zealous teachers had made a prayer of this description, without any idea of shaking the foundations of Church and State ; but the matter was amended as soon as known, and it was understood, that if they had no book they should never pray again.

At the time when the English nation was in its highest state of excitement, and before the excesses of the French revolution had alarmed its early friends, the spirit of opposition to established institutions was extending itself so rapidly, that even the pilot who weathered the storm, seemed likely to be overborne by a mutinous crew. The friends of Hannah More, knowing her power of adaptation to all to whom she wished to address herself, believed that the same tact which had made her exert a happy influence on persons of rank, would enable her to do much to calm the agitated minds of the poor. It is no easy matter to persuade men to submit to evils, when they think that they have it in their power to redress them ; and yet it is certain, that premature attempts at reform often add years to the duration of the evil which they are intended to remove. It was well for England, that the popular movement, then beginning, was stayed and suspended, since by waiting the time she has gained the benefit of that experience, which France was compelled to buy with a prodigal expense of blood ; now established institutions are so far undermined, that their friends are obliged to hold them up ; in that day, they were so firm that their opposers would have been compelled to struggle hard to pull them down, and had they succeeded, they might themselves have been crushed under their fall. After resisting much urgency from her friends, Hannah More wrote her *Village Politics*, as a hasty experiment, and published it without her name ; it had a most rapid and perfect success ; being adapted in manner and spirit to the poor, it made a deep impression upon that class ; and the higher orders, who by no means felt safe in the possession of their titles or fortunes, exerted themselves to spread it throughout the kingdom. Finding that this new field of enterprise was opened, she wrote the tracts which compose her *Cheap Repository* ; every one has heard of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain ; and such publications took a hold upon the minds of the people, which no doubt had great effect in reconciling them to a state which was certainly hard, but could only be made worse by hasty attempts to alter. The arguments which they contained in favor of contentment did something ; but we doubt not that these tracts did much more, by turning the minds of the poor into new directions. Reading was not common among them as it is now ; and tracts, especially tracts adapted to their

habits of thought, were almost unknown before ; probably the strong religious feeling which these publications inspired, was the most efficient agent in calming that deep excitement, which threatened to make all things level, by raising the valley and bringing the mountain low.

We do not intend to follow her through the history of her life, which was prolonged for many years, in which she suffered much from sickness and loss of friends ; but they were nevertheless as happy as the respect and affection of others, the consciousness of doing good and a firm religious trust could make them. Her later works were of a religious cast ; not addressed to particular classes like the others, and therefore less successful ; since it was in this adaptation to those whom she wished to influence that her strength lay. But they do great honor both to her mind and heart. In sentiment, still more in style, they are not always judicious, but generally they display the marks of a strong, ready, and discriminating hand ; no fault can be found with their spirit, for though men of the world charged her with excessive rigor, it would not be easy to show in what particular she transcended the great rule which all profess to follow, nor did she ever prescribe a rule for others which she did not herself observe. Her charity was most exemplary ; throughout her writings we find a strong attachment to her own opinions indeed, such as belongs to an independent mind ; but notwithstanding this strength of conviction, or possibly in consequence of this strength of conviction, she gave others full credit for equal sincerity, and never suffered her good feeling to other sects or individuals to be influenced by difference of opinion. Every day she read in Catholic books of devotion, and never suffered her regret for their errors to blind her to their fervent spirit ; in one instance she was attacked by a Catholic priest, for an unguarded expression in one of her books which seemed to him uncharitable ; but the correspondence between them on the occasion, shows at once that she was not the party to whom that word would most fitly apply. She kept up a familiar intercourse with the Unitarian Mrs. Barbauld ; nor did either feel the less admiration for the talents and virtues of the other, because they were separated by the lines of religious party. In short, though we are far from agreeing with her in all her views, we know not where there is to be found a more exemplary, consistent and engaging manifestation of the religious spirit, than her

life and writings display. It required moral courage in one who was caressed and flattered by the great, to hazard her popularity by telling unwelcome truths ; it required something still better than courage to enable her to face the opposition and ingratitude of the poor ; but, in all the relations of life, she seems to have been governed by a cheerful sense of duty, and the same strong principle was the animating spirit of her writings.

It was this singleness of heart, — this warm and generous sympathy with her race, which constituted the great attraction of her works. Her mind, though active and powerful, was not of the first order : she often took miniature views of great subjects, — correct enough as far as they went, but not sufficiently enlarged. There is often more regard to the point of the sentence than to the scope of the argument, and an epigrammatical way of setting down her reflections, which was unfavorable to logical deductions. The very circumstance that her works were so successful, every one of them passing through many editions, would create a suspicion that they were of a fashion which passes away. And this is true of them ; they are now not generally read, — and they will excite less and less interest in future years. Being meant, and wonderfully suited for a given time, they are not of the kind which are suited to all times ; they may be forgotten, but she will always retain a high traditional fame as one who exerted a considerable influence upon her own age, and that the age of Goldsmith, Burke and Johnson. Of all her efforts *Cœlebs* was the least successful ; not because it wants merit, but because it was founded in the mistake of supposing that she could exert herself to more advantage by assuming a popular disguise. She should have considered that the religious teacher, while he gains nothing by assuming the dress and bearing of a man of the world, will lose the respect which he had power to command when in his proper station ; we believe that she was sensible that the attempt was not happy, though the sale of the work was rapid and extensive ; some of her friends begged her to repeat the experiment, but she would not be persuaded. But the abatements to be made in her reputation are but few and small, and the severest criticism must allow her enough for substantial and enviable fame.

Hannah More died in September of the last year, at the age of eighty-eight. Several years before her death she was

obliged to quit Barey Woods, the place which she had formed after her own taste, and in which she hoped to die, in consequence of the bad conduct of her servants, who had taken advantage of her great indulgence. But her sisters were dead ; she herself was waiting to follow, and it was of little importance to her where she passed the remaining hours of her closing day. Her powers of body and mind failed after that time, but not so rapidly as might have been expected from a constitution which had never been strong, and was then undermined by sickness added to the infirmity of age. Her disposition was cheerful and even playful to the very last ; we mean the last period of her conscious existence ; for she was brought by successive stages of decline to such a state of helplessness, that her mind almost failed her for a year before her death. Her death was a gentle and willing separation from the living ; when she retired to rest her work was done ; how well done the world has testified by a verdict, which we may hope will be affirmed on high.

ART. X.—*Character of Jefferson.*

1. *Remarks on Article IX. in the Eighty-Fourth Number of the North American Review, [July, 1834.] entitled Origin and Character of the Old Parties.* 8vo. pp. 39. Boston. 1834.
2. *Life of Thomas Jefferson, with Selections from the most valuable Portions of his Private Correspondence.* By B. L. RAYNER. 12mo. pp. 431. Boston. 1834.

THE first of these writings is intended as a reply to the article on the origin and character of the old political parties, which appeared in the July number of this journal. It is anonymous and carries with it no distinct internal evidence of its origin, but is understood to proceed from the author of the work, entitled *Familiar Letters on Public Characters and Events*, which formed one of the immediate subjects of that article.

The second of the works now before us is an unpretending but judicious and entertaining *Life of Mr. Jefferson*, including